

Ex-CIA chief says spying should go on

The New York Times _____ STAT
 The Washington Times _____
 The Wall Street Journal _____
 The Christian Science Monitor _____
 New York Daily News _____
 USA Today _____
 The Chicago Tribune _____
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By Kevin Nance
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Covert intelligence activity should continue as part of American foreign policy as long as it is undertaken "within the system of checks and balances," former CIA Director William Colby said last night.

Colby, who was director in the Nixon and Ford administrations, spoke to about 100 members of the University of Kentucky Library Associates' annual meeting at Spindletop Hall in Lexington.

Delivering the seventh annual Edward F. Pritchard Jr. lecture, "Intelligence for a Better World," Colby commented on a number of CIA activities over the last 25 years.

"Some secret operations have been wise, some foolish; some effective, some disastrous," he said.

Colby listed in the "disastrous" category the Bay of Pigs invasion and last year's Iran-contra affair.

"When you want to do this type of thing, go to the pros, not to enthusiastic amateurs ... who turned to people like Ghorbanifar, who whenever he got near a lie detector it went off."

Manucher Ghorbanifar was the Iranian middleman in some of the arms deals with Iran.

If congressional intelligence oversight committees had been consulted about trading arms for hostages as a means of establishing relationships with Iranian moderates, Colby said, "They would have said, 'What moderates?' (The operation) would have been shown to be a bad idea."

The Iran-contra initiative was misguided, he said, because it took place "outside American authority and American law."

Asked whether he thought Lt. Col. Oliver North and other Iran-contra figures indicted last week would be convicted, Colby said: "It's a close thing. ... Washington juries do have a history of convicting people."

Intelligence-gathering techniques have undergone what Colby called "a series of revolutions" in the last 25 years.

The advances have made possible a number of foreign policy victories and a series of gains in arms control agreements between the superpowers, he said.

Intelligence provides "a process to negotiate with potential adversaries ... that's better than pointing nuclear weapons at each other," he said.

Colby said superior verification techniques helped fuel the arms-reduction treaty signed by President Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev last year, he said, and will make more treaties possible.

Intelligence also will play a major role in helping solve such international problems as the security of oil supplies and terrorism.

"There were times when we had a pretty good idea where the hostages were in Beirut," he said, "but the question was how to get them out alive."

In addition to the Colby speech, board members of the Library Associates discussed acquisition problems caused by recent budget cuts.

Outgoing President Scott D. Breckinridge said there was a "dire need" to maintain the UK library's rating as one of the nation's major research libraries.

Breckinridge noted that the declining dollar had diminished UK's ability to maintain its subscriptions to journals and monographs, many of which are produced abroad.